

## **U.S. Support to Ecuador's Educational Agenda**

The United States and Ecuador enjoy strong cooperation in the field of education, especially in English teaching and higher education. Through a wide range of English language programs, the U.S. government supports Ecuador's efforts to improve English teaching capabilities nationwide, and unlocks greater academic and career opportunities for underprivileged Ecuadorian youth.

The United States is Ecuador's top higher education partner, and our two nations have witnessed robust and growing two-way academic exchange. Ecuador is one of the top five destinations for U.S. students in Latin America, hosting almost 3,600 U.S. students. Nearly 2,300 Ecuadorians study in the United States. Ecuador's higher education Secretariat, SENESCYT, contributes approximately \$800,000 to our Fulbright Commission, nearly doubling the number of Fulbright scholarships available for top Ecuadorian scholars. In support of Ecuador's higher education agenda and President Obama's "[100,000 Strong in the Americas](#)" initiative, the U.S. government offers educational advising to Ecuadorian students, fosters linkages between Ecuadorian and U.S. universities, and provides technical assistance to Ecuadorian officials on university administration.

### **English Language Programs**

- **Micro-scholarship Programs.** The U.S. government offers scholarships to academically gifted teenagers from low-income families to study intensive English for two years. The scholarships provide underprivileged students with tools to improve their career mobility through better academic training and expanded job opportunities. To date, nearly 1,000 Ecuadorian youth have benefited from these English enrichment programs.
- **English Linguists and Teaching Professionals.** The U.S. Mission in Ecuador and Fulbright Commission collaborate with Ecuadorian universities and government institutions to bring highly skilled English linguists and English teaching/learning professionals to Ecuador every year to assist on projects ranging from teacher training and curriculum development, to more specific areas like teaching a second language to disabled learners. The U.S. government currently sponsors an English Language Fellow in Loja who works full time with local teachers and students to improve English capabilities in that city. The Peace Corps has 24 volunteers teaching English across Ecuador, with 30 more scheduled to arrive in January.
- **Network and Curriculum Development for Ecuadorian Higher Education Institutes.** In response to the Ministry of Education's goal of developing a stronger cadre of English language teachers around the country, U.S. Embassy Quito has supported the development of a formal network of university "pre-service" programs (the Ecuadorian English Language Programs Network, or EELPN) to explore challenges related to teacher training and to develop a common curriculum for Ecuadorian English training programs. Over the past three years, U.S. English standards expert Dr. Natalie Kuhlman has led the network in developing a standardized curriculum and study plan for English teaching majors at Ecuadorian pre-service institutions. This curriculum will be submitted to Ecuador's higher education bodies – CES and SENESCYT – for consideration and approval in early 2015.
- **Support for the creation of a Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESOL) chapter in Ecuador.** TESOL is an internationally-recognized English language network,

based in the United States, that works with U.S. federal and state education agencies to develop standards for English teaching and training and that sponsors legally recognized chapters in many countries around the world. The U.S. Embassy, in collaboration with various Ecuadorian universities, is working to establish a TESOL chapter in Ecuador. The proposed chapter will allow Ecuadorian English teachers better access to professional development opportunities; the opportunity to enter the linguistic research field and publish in technical journals; and networking with a community of English teaching professionals around the world. The chapter is currently being legalized under Ecuadorian law before it can be presented to TESOL USA for acceptance in late 2014.

- **Short-term Teacher Training and Professional Development.** The U.S. government supports an ongoing series of seminars, workshops, on-line training, and exchanges for English teachers in Ecuador. The Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) program sends English-speaking teachers on a six-week exchange to the United States to obtain training in the latest teaching methodologies, practice their teaching skills, and network with professionals from across the globe. The “E-teacher” program offers a 10-week on-line training to teachers in nine different fields. We also offer on-line training through webinars and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in English training methodology. Finally, the U.S. government offers seminars and workshops on teaching methodology for public high school teachers connected with our micro-scholarship programs and in coordination with our U.S.-Ecuador Binational Centers and other host institutions.

### **Higher education**

- **Technical exchanges on higher education administration.** The U.S. Department of State organized a visit to the United States in May 2014 for six Ecuadorian government officials to explore the U.S. system of evaluation and accreditation for higher education institutions. A second delegation of SENESCYT officials is traveling to the United States on a State Department-sponsored visit from October 26 to November 5 to study the U.S. community college system. This technical exchange is intended to assist SENESCYT in its implementation of the “Institutos Técnicos” program in Ecuador.
- **Facilitating University Linkages:** The U.S. Mission in Ecuador works directly with local universities to build capacity and connect them with funding and partnership opportunities that support study abroad and exchange programs between the U.S. and Ecuador. *La Universidad San Francisco de Quito*, in collaboration with three U.S. universities, received a “100,000 Strong in the Americas” Innovation Fund grant to build study abroad programs through a student research program in science. In 2013, Embassy Quito hosted a U.S. higher education technical expert to conduct workshops on establishing linkages with U.S. universities to facilitate academic mobility. In November 2014, the Embassy will host an additional workshop for several Ecuadorian universities interested in participating in the “100,000 Strong in the Americas” grant competitions.
- **Educational Advising:** The U.S. government offers EducationUSA advising centers in Quito, Cuenca, and Guayaquil to provide information to Ecuadorian students about how to study in the United States. Last year, EducationUSA advisers assisted more than 25,000 Ecuadorans in person and another 20,000 online.

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